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# THE EXPANDING ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN THE SOVIET UNION

1. The invasion of Czechoslovakia by the armed forces of the "Warsaw Five" provides a useful opportunity to focus attention on the role of the military forces in the Soviet Union. The background paper which is attached together with several news articles will help provide substance to support the following themes, which we wish to stress.

2. The growing influence of the military leaders on Soviet policy is a source of alarm for both the Free and Communist worlds because:

a. The secrecy under which the Soviet system operates completely obscures the actions and intentions of the Soviet military forces and their influence on the Soviet government;

b. There is a total lack of any popular control over the Soviet military forces, through elections, parliamentary budget approval, a free and critical press, or any of the other checks of a democratic system;

c. The military mentality goes hand in hand with the growing neo-Stalinism which is already a source of major alarm to all free people;

d. The growing influence of the military high command reflects a weakness in the civilian leadership of the country.

3. Soviet foreign relations increasingly emphasize military force. This was painfully evident in Czechoslovakia. It is also true in Soviet foreign aid, which is more and more military aid -- in the volatile Middle East, in the Indian sub-continent, in Vietnam, to name the most obvious areas. This military aid reflects, in turn, Soviet chauvinism and imperialism and is totally removed from theories of the expansion of Communism via Communist parties, class struggle, etc., etc.

4. The burden of Soviet military might weighs most heavily on the Soviet citizen, the consumer who sacrifices a decent life, a decent standard of living, all for the sake of armaments.

5. Pacifists and peace fronts, whether controlled or only indirectly influenced by the Soviets, can and should be challenged to turn at least part of their fire toward the Soviet Union. After all, what more blatant breach of the peace could there be than the invasion and occupation of an economic, political and military ally such as Czechoslovakia? Let the peace fronts demand, as a beginning, the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Czechoslovakia.

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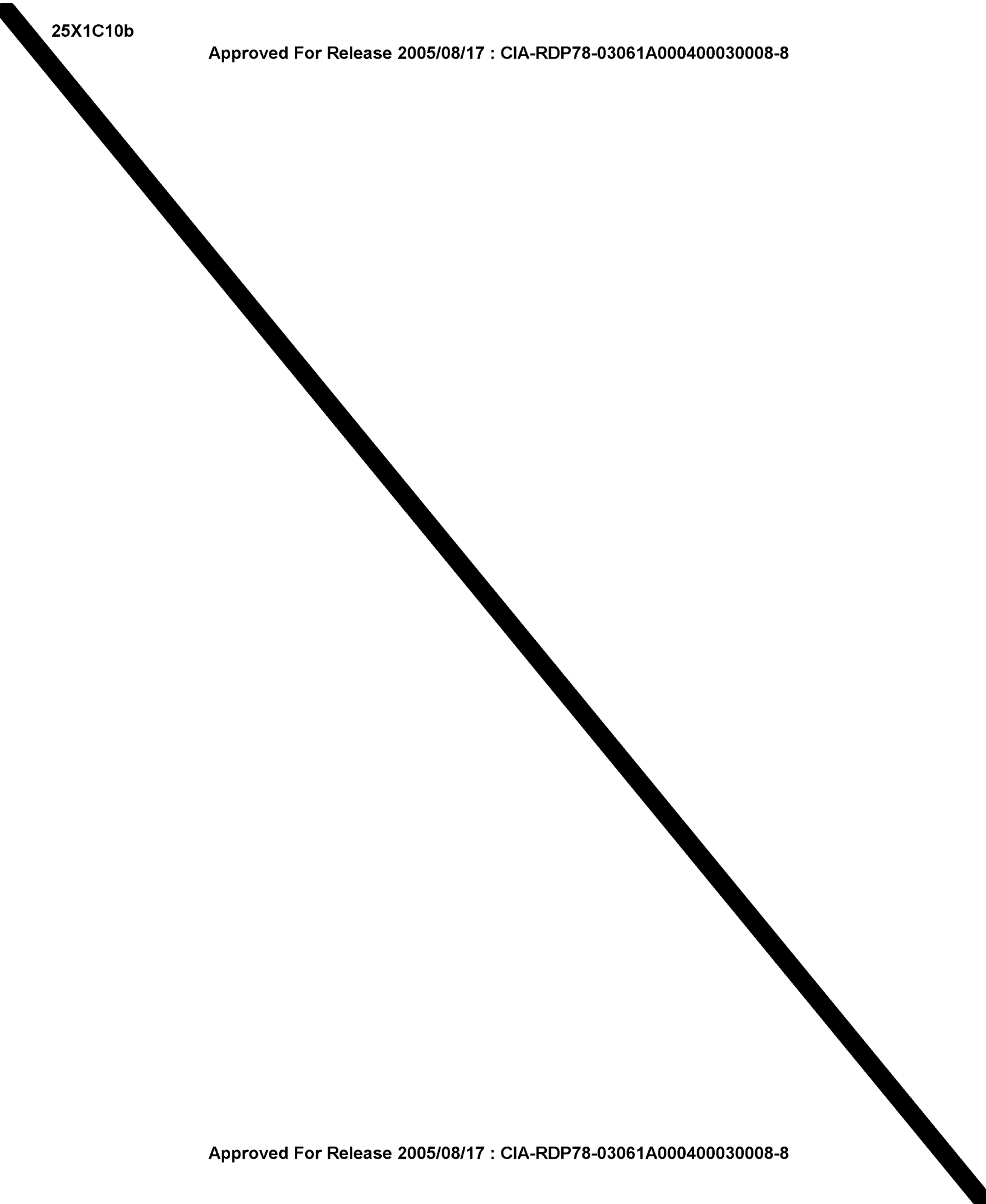

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# THE EXPANDING ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union has been a strongly militarized society from its beginning as a result of being either mobilized for war or semi-mobilized during peacetime. Trade unions, the Young Communist League, home-guard and civil defense societies, and a host of other mass organizations supplement the military forces. Premilitary training and patriotic indoctrination are included in Soviet education from grade school up. A large percentage of the nation's scientists have been assigned to defense tasks. Many government officials wear uniforms (as did Stalin). Party and government business is carried out in an atmosphere of military discipline.

Against this background of a militarized society stands the military establishment itself. According to the Institute for Strategic Studies in London, the USSR's regular military forces are estimated at 3,220,000 men. In addition, security and border troops of the KGB (secret police) and other paramilitary forces amount to about 250,000 men. Total expenditures for military purposes are estimated at about $50 billion, a figure which represents both the overtly budgeted amount and the cost of military goods and research which are hidden in non-military sections of the budget. The military expenditures amounted to about 14-15% of the USSR's gross national product in 1967, which represent a very heavy toll on a nation which has put the needs of its population last during most of the past 50 years. (In Western Europe such expenditures amount to 5% to 10% of gross national product.)

Throughout Soviet military history, the Communist Party has endeavored to exert a dominant and rigid control over the armed forces. This has been carried out by the Main Political Administration of the Armed Forces, which is, in effect, the representative of the Communist Party within the military services. In the early days, the political officers concerned themselves mainly with checking on the reliability of the military personnel. At times, however, the power of these political officers has been so great that they have intervened in strictly military affairs, and have even gone so far as to countermand military orders.

Indications of this continuing struggle may frequently be found in Soviet military publications such as Kommunist Vooruzhennikh Sil (Communist of the Armed Forces), Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star, daily newspaper of the Ministry of Defense), and Voyenno-Istorichesky Zhurnal (Military History Journal). A case in point was an article by Chief of Staff Marshal M.V. Zakharov in Red Star on 4 January 1965 in which he made a bid for a larger role for the military in the Soviet command structure. He criticized Stalin for rejecting professional advice from "prominent military theoreticians and practitioners" and attacked Khrushchev for the "very expensive" and "irreparable" damage caused by his intrusions into military policy.

The Communist Party has also attempted to insure its dominace by requiring that all military leaders -- including the entire top leadership of the army, navy, air and rocket forces -- be members of the Communist Party. Although the intent of this is to provide control over the military, control flows in the opposite direction as well and this party membership gives the top echelons of the armed forces a major voice in the highest levels of the Party.

Control of the position of Minister of Defense is also a key question in this respect. When Stalin died, Marshal Bulganin, who was in fact a non-military man, became Minister of Defense. When Khrushchev unseated Malenkov in 1955, Marshal Zhukov was appointed Minister of Defense, only to be removed in 1957, shortly after Khrushchev had (reportedly with Zhukov's help) overcome the opposition of a majority in the ruling Presidium which had tried to oust him. Marshal Malinovsky replaced Zhukov and remained in that position until his death on 31 March 1967. Then it was rumored that a non-military man might be appointed to replace him and D.F. Ustinov, the experienced top manager of the defense industry, was most commonly expected to get the job. However, on 12 April 1967 Marshal A.A. Grechko was named Minister of Defense. Some months later it was reported that Ustinov had indeed been nominated by the Presidium but that his appointment had been vetoed by the Marshals who chose Grechko for the post.

Although hard facts about the behind-the-scenes role and influence of the Soviet armed forces upon the political direction of the country are hard to obtain, the overall picture may be clearly deduced from the budgetary allocations to the military forces and from the obviously increasing emphasis on the military aspects of Soviet foreign policy.

In the economy*, budgeted military spending has risen about 30 percent between 1965 and 1968, while at the same time gross national product (GNP) has increased somewhat less than 20%. Most of this rise in military spending will have occurred in 1968, for which the military budget is 15 percent higher than in 1967. This sizable jump indicates how the Soviets have chosen to solve the economic dilemma that developed in 1966 and 1967 when Kosygin and other leaders stated on one or another occasion that each of the following constituted the most important economic objectives: (a) strengthening national defense, (b) raising agricultural production, (c) modernizing industry and raising its effieiency, and (d) improving the life of the consumer.

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*In this discussion most of the material on the Soviet economy is from Soviet Economic Performance: 1966-67, a report issued in Washington, D.C., by the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the U.S.A., in 1968. This report is based on a listed total of 564 Soviet books and articles, and it provides a number of analyses and figures concerning Soviet economic development and comparisons with other countries' economies.

The demands for military spending increased as a result of the evident decision to broaden the offensive capabilities of the armed forces. Under Khrushchev there had been a heavy concentration on strategic forces (missile unites for attack and defensive purposes) at the expense of the conventional army, navy and air forces.

But, since the advent of the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, there has been a strong demand from the military leaders for all-around military development. Leading Soviet military writers have been urging the creation of forces capable of a "flexible response" to military challenges. This means not only both strategic weapons systems and conventional forces for the defense of Soviet territory, but also forces capable of carrying out military operations in areas removed from the USSR. For example, Colonel A.A. Strokov in History of the Military Art, a book published in 1966, reemphasized the need for skillful coordination of combined nuclear and conventional forces in general war as well as the independent use of conventional forces in local wars. Similarly, Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy, S.G. Gorshkov, writing in Morskoi Sbornik (Naval Journal) of February 1967, stated: "By a well-balanced fleet we mean a fleet which, in composition and armament, is capable of carrying out missions assigned to it, not only in a nuclear war, but in a war which does not make use of nuclear weapons, and is also able to support state interests at sea in peacetime."

The success of the military in pressing for this "flexible response" capability is suggested by the increases in military budget outlays. It is also evident from the increased number of naval vessels, such as helicopter carriers and task force units, capable of extended deployment on the high seas. Soviet military air transport capabilities are also increasing rapidly; a tangential result has been Soviet offers to sell military cargo aircraft to a number of Free World countries.

That the other "most important" economic objectives have not fared as well as the military forces is evident from Soviet data. In regard to raising agricultural production, the Soviets attained some short-lived success partly because of very favorable weather, especially in 1967, and partly by increasing the use of fertilizer and improving incentives. However, coincidental with increased demands for defense expenditures in 1967, the program for agricultural investment was cut back. The 1970 plan for mineral fertilizer production, one of the keys to increasing agricultural production, was reduced from Khrushchev's 77 million tons to 62 million tons, and even that goal is now doubtful because the Soviets have lagged in plant construction. Brezhnev, in his 30 October speech to the CPSU Central Committee, harshly criticized leading agricultural officials for shortcomings in developing and carrying out farm programs. More relevantly, Brezhnev criticized planning organs for diverting investment funds and resources earmarked for agriculture to "other objectives."

Industrial development also has been adversely affected. Instead of increasing investments to modernize industry, the Soviets have allowed

them to slip below the relatively modest growth levels set for the 1966-70 plan. The growth rates of civilian machinery production have fallen quite sharply as military output has expanded. One marked result of this lag has been that the Soviets, in spite of being aware that their gains in industrial productivity have fallen well behind those of Western Europe, the U.S.A., and Japan, have been hindered in raising industrial efficiency.

The final "most important" objective, improving the life of the Soviet consumer, has suffered equally. Although per capita consumption increased in 1966-67 by 4.8% per year, this was slightly below the planned rate of 5% in spite of unusually good crops in those years. Investment in new plants to produce consumer goods has fallen behind schedule, thus jeopardizing future production increases.

The Soviets' most difficult current problem with consumer goods is their poor quality. (In contrast, Soviet military goods are usually rated good to high in quality.) The CPSU newspaper Sovetskaya Rossiya (Soviet Russia) on 30 May 1968 reported that an inspector of the Ministry of Trade had rejected, because of poor quality, 25% of the furniture, 22% of the clothing, 13% of the toys, 11% of the knitwear, and 8% of the shoes he had examined. Soviet shoppers are refusing to buy such shoddy goods and are saving their money instead: in 1963, savings accounts equaled 14% of disposable income while in 1967 savings equaled 20% of disposable income. Another indication of poor quality is the very high inventory of soft goods, amounting to 40% of sales in 1966; indeed, a large part of this inventory represents unsaleable goods.

As the Soviet military has increased its share of the country's output under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, so it almost undoubtedly has also been increasing its influence in other spheres. Because of the growing complexity of possible military conflicts and of the vastly more sophisticated weaponry involved, Soviet political leaders have been put into the position of having more and more to rely on the military commanders' knowledge and judgment in developing strategic and military policy. As a consequence, the Kremlin's military expansion during recent years has roughly coincided with a rising militarization of Soviet foreign policy. "Peaceful coexistence" has been phased out of the Soviet vocabulary as neo-Stalinism has grown under the present regime.

Foreign military aid programs have expanded enormously in the past several years. The Soviets have unstintingly supported North Vietnam with over a billion rubles worth of war goods. They have poured weapons worth about a half billion rubles into the Near East since the Arab-Israeli war in mid-1967. Moreover, they spent large sums on maneuvers in Czechoslovakia this spring, and much more to occupy that country in the fall. Possibly pointing to an extension of this trend is the above-mentioned increase in the Soviets' capabilities to intervene in political trouble spots around the world.

It was widely conjectured that the Soviet military leaders had a major influence in the decision to intervene in Czechoslovakia. First, the Soviet military have long been concerned over the fact that the western frontier of the Warsaw Pact countries was defended only by Czechoslovaks in Czechoslovakia, whereas Soviet troops are stationed in both Poland and East Germany to complement the forces of those countries. Secondly, the Soviet military leaders feared that Czechoslovakia might withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, despite the most formal and repeated assurances of the Czechoslovak leaders, and transform Czechoslovakia into a "dagger pointed at the heart of the Soviet Union" -- an absolutely archaic argument in this age of inter-continental ballistic missiles.

General Yakubovsky, Moscow's chief of all Warsaw Pact forces, and General Yepishev, the Soviet armed forces' number one political officer, busily commuted between Moscow and the Warsaw Pact capitals just before the invasion, and presumably they were responsible for planning and carrying out the invasion.

Since the invasion, Soviet military publications have reported the armed forces' role with unmistakable pride ... in a tone which bodes no joy for the rest of the world, be it free or Communist.

NEW YORK TIMES
24 November 1968

# Moscow: The Soviet Union's Old-Boy Network

By JAMES RESTON

MOSCOW, Nov. 23—The pace of life seems to be picking up a bit in the Soviet Union. The traffic is heavier and faster on the great wide Moscow streets. The Russians have discovered the skyscraper and the glass facade, and they even have a modestly naughty night club and a television tower with a revolving restaurant in the sky.

The Soviet scientists are even forcing the pace of life itself. They are experimenting with infants, taken from home eight days after birth, and rushing the training, learning and walking processes. At the Academy of Sciences, they are studying what they call the Soviet new man, and trying to estimate what he will be like in the year 2000 and how he will fit into the Soviet system and vice versa.

**The Paradox**

Still, there seems to be a thumping paradox in all this quickening process. For this is a young country run by comparatively old men. It may be bringing people to maturity faster, but it is making its young men wait longer before letting them have effective political power.

The Chairman of the Council of Ministers, A. N. Kosygin, is 64. The General Secretary of the Communist party of the U.S.S.R., L. I. Brezhnev, is 62. The chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, N. V. Podgorny, is 65. The full members of the Politburo average 59 years and seven months, the youngest in this category being A. N. Shelepin, who is 50.

Even the candidate members of the secretariat average just under 55, and the so-called junior members average over 52, and this same tendency to rely on older men is even more marked in the Soviet armed services.

The Minister of Defense is 65, and his first deputy 61. In fact all the deputies, including all main force commanders, average 63 years and four months.

Though a recent Soviet law says that generals of the army must retire at 60, the old-boy network has managed to get around this by promoting generals to the rank of marshal, where they can keep going for years. Thus the chief of the Soviet general staff is 70, and the commanders of the Soviet forces in Germany and in the Warsaw Pact are in their middle sixties.

**The Ladder System**

There is a younger generation of technicians who have great influence in many key industrial and military factories and many brilliant young scientists are said to be working on the Soviet space program, but even officials dealing with the young are well along in life. The rector of Moscow University, for example, is 61, and the Minister of Higher Education is 61.

The explanation of this seems to be that men progress slowly up through the party ranks in the Soviet Union and reach the collective leadership only by that route. Under this system, according to Soviet experts here, an inordinate number of decisions have to be taken at the top, and they are usually taken collectively by men well into middle age.

The sociologists at the Academy of Sciences are now going through a systematic study of the complaints of young Soviet men and women about this system and they are hearing more and more grumbling about the failure to get into the main action while they are at the height of their experience and energies in their late thirties and forties.

In fact, there are many observers here who feel that the Soviet Union will continue to fall further and further behind in modern industrial production unless it decentralizes the decision-making process here and gives its young men a much larger share in the action.

Increasingly, even the older members of the Politburo have come to believe that only through increasing the material incentives for creative work will the U.S.S.R. achieve its goals. The new plans for the production of private automobiles may very well help this, but the large new auto plant being built in the Soviet Union by Fiat is still years from production.

**Savings and Inflation**

Meanwhile, savings and inflation are increasing. Even a small Soviet car which sells for about 1,000 rubles would bring three times that much after it had been run for a year, if it could be sold here on the open market.

The Moscow night club and the restaurant in the TV tower are indications of the growing demand for new ways to spend capital and leisure time. The only trouble is that the crush is so great in both places that tables usually have to be booked weeks in advance.

The lack of the incentives of influence and power during the most creative years, however, is probably the main defect in the system. The Soviet educational system is undoubtedly turning out many competent and even brilliant young men and women, and they get jobs, but not political power. That comes much later at an age when most advanced countries are usually asking their leaders to retire.



NEW YORK TIMES
24 November 1968


# Foreign Affairs: The Refreeze

By C. L. SULZBERGER

MOSCOW — There are disturbing indications in both East and West that a period of strained relationships containing many elements of former cold war days may again be settling in.

Two basic developments signalizing this refreeze are Soviet proclamation of its new "commonwealth" doctrine, under which Moscow assumes the right to interfere anywhere within the "Socialist" world, and NATO's assumption of the right to oppose such interference.

**Moscow's Hard Line**

Behind these developments lie serious changes in the political complexion of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. A hard line best typified by the single word "Czechoslovakia" has seemingly been assumed by the Kremlin leadership. This hard line does not appear to represent an ideological trend, for even Mikhail Suslov, leading Stalinist in the Soviet Presidium, opposed the Czech invasion.

What seems to have reversed the post-Stalin thawing process has been an increased military role in Soviet politics. The army now has a higher specific gravity in Moscow's political solution and Brezhnev, the Communist party boss, is generally regarded as the marshals' favorite leader.

In the wake of this disturbing shift come hints that the incoming American Administration may be less ready to ease tensions with Russia than has been the case with President Johnson. Nobody can accurately foresee the foreign policy fundaments of President Nixon, but advance indications are that these may well be what Moscow will call "tougher."

One must add another element that can only in the long run aggravate the situation: This is the increasing American influence on West Europe's economy and the effort by Russia to retain its own massive influence in the East, an effort that has not been wholly successful.

The enormous productive and management capacities of the United States exert a powerful and mounting pull on Europe's evolution. This combined magnetic attraction of the West is so enormous that it sucks the East towards it.

Trade arrangements are even more important in international relationships than military treaties, and Moscow has already seen how one important economic client, Yugoslavia, rearranged its commercial patterns after establishing political independence.

A similar trend is perceptible in Rumania and had started in

tary leaders already have enough leverage to stand out against the party Presidiums' announced wishes, and to name their own defense minister. If this is correct, we are clearly dealing with a rather new kind of Soviet government.

That may in turn explain the strange course the Soviets took before they invaded Czechoslovakia, and it may also cast much light on the invasion itself, which made such fools of the "world opinion"-thinkers about foreign affairs on the American liberal-left. The boa constrictor methods which the Soviets are now so brutally using, to crush the last vestiges of Czechoslovakia's internal freedom, furthermore, appear to have a strong military flavor.

But there is more to it than that, if the Soviet marshals are indeed moving toward the kind of position formerly occupied by the older German General Staff (their true model, one may be sure). In addition to looking like Gen. LeMay cubed, a good many of the marshals can be expected to think as Gen. LeMay thinks.

That makes a pretty prospect, when one considers, for example, the dreadful situation that's now developing in the Middle East. And this prospect also gives much validity to Richard M. Nixon's insistence that this country needs an undoubted margin of power. For it is very doubtful whether Soviet marshals use their computers the way Robert S. McNamara used them.